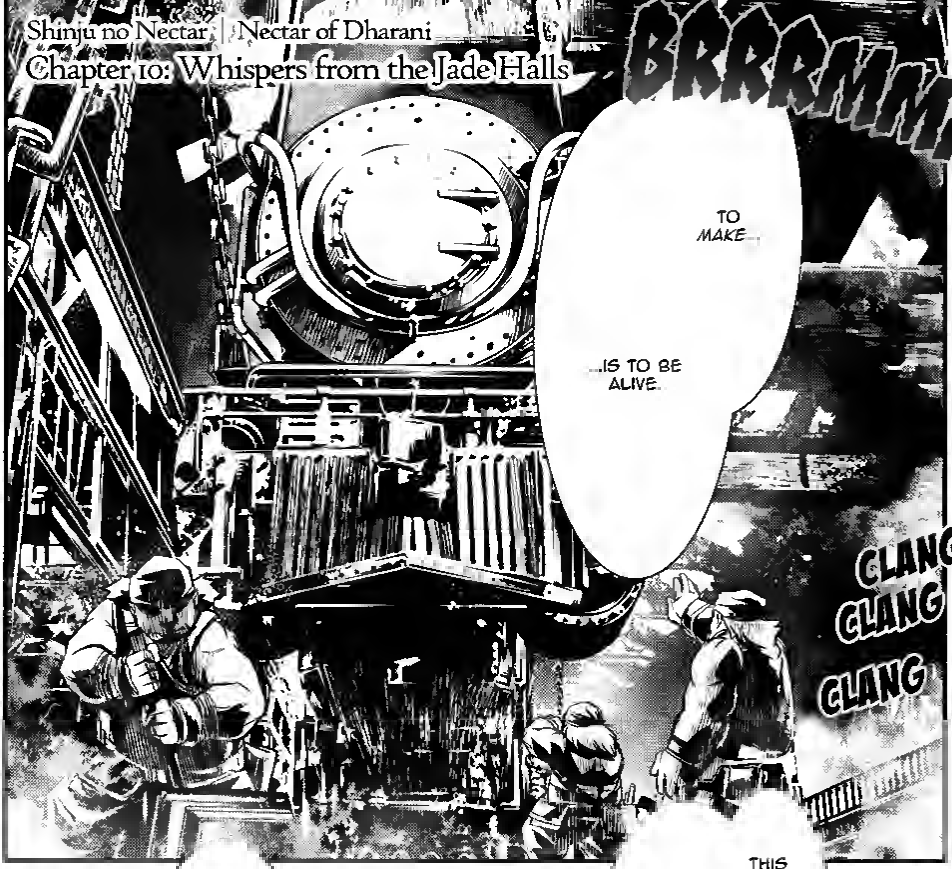
Chapter 10: Whispers from the Jade Halls



2

...AND THEN PROCESS IT INTO A FINISHED PRODUCT.
IN THIS HALL, WE HAVE EVERY THING WE NEED.
THIS BUILDING HALL...
...ALSO SERVES AS AN ORE DEPOSIT.
AND WHATEVER WE MINE, WE CAN SMELT AND REFINE HERE AS WELL.
PSSHH

CLANG
WHEN THE GODS LEFT AND THE OLD MAGIC BEGAN TO FADE...
...OUR WORK WAS MADE EASIER
BOOM
BOOM
THE SCIENCES ARE THE SAME EVERYWHERE
NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE OR WHERE YOU ARE, ONE AND ONE MAKES TWO, ALWAYS
UNLIKE MAGIC...
...WHERE ONE AND ONE MIGHT GIVE YOU TWO. BUT IT MAY AS WELL BE FOUR, OR A HUNDRED.
...
Some reader sites may remove or block pages with mature content
You can find the uncensored chapters at www.fnemang.tk

WHAT'S THAT?
!
WHOA...!
LOOK AT THIS THING...
THAT...
...IS OUR MASTER-PIECE...
AND AT THE SAME TIME...
...IT'S A BITTER FAILURE

IT IS THE
FORTRESS
ENGINE!

THIS ARMOR...
A NORMAL CANNON WOULD HARDLY EVEN SCRATCH THE PAINT!
YOU'RE RIGHT.
ALL THE THINGS I CAN REMEMBER FROM MY PART-TIME JOBS IN CONSTRUCTION AND METALWORK...

...TELL ME THIS THING IS NOTHING SHORT OF AMAZING...
A WONDER OF CREATION AND SKILL...
AGAIN, JUST LOOK AT THE RIVETS! EVEN WITH SUCH THICK AND HEAVY PLATES, YOU CAN STILL BARELY SEE THE SEAMS!
I'M CURIOUS, KING HAVOL...
WHY WOULD YOU CALL SOMETHING LIKE THIS A FAILURE?
IT WAS MADE AT THE REQUEST OF THE KINGDOM OF RANGIR.
WHEN THEY CAME TO US...
...THEIR COFFERS WERE WIDE OPEN.
THEY WANTED THE MIGHTIEST WAR-TRAIN THE WORLD HAD EVER SEEN...
...AND WE SET TO WORK WITH OUR HEARTS FULL OF PRIDE AND THE SPIRIT OF MAKING.

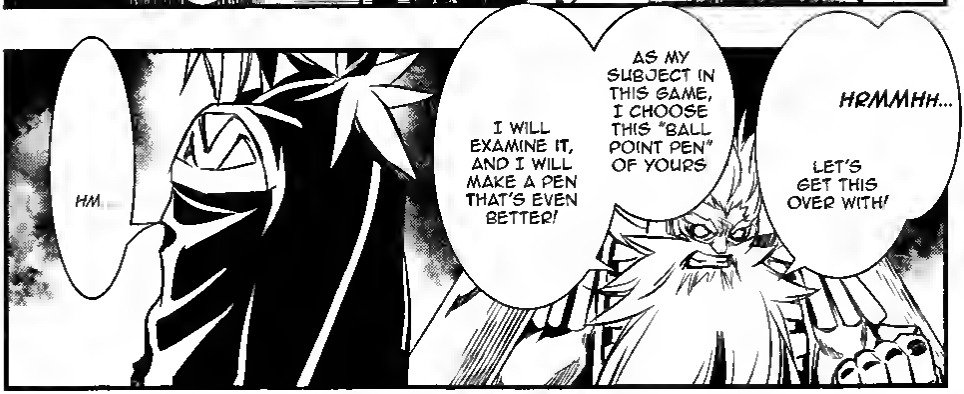
BUT WITH ENDLESS FUNDS AND NO SET TIME OF DELIVERY, THE JOY OF CREATION OVERTOOK US.
ONE NEW THING LED TO ANOTHER...
...AND MEANWHILE, WITHOUT WARNING, DHALA FELL ON RANGIR, AND RANGIR WAS NO MORE

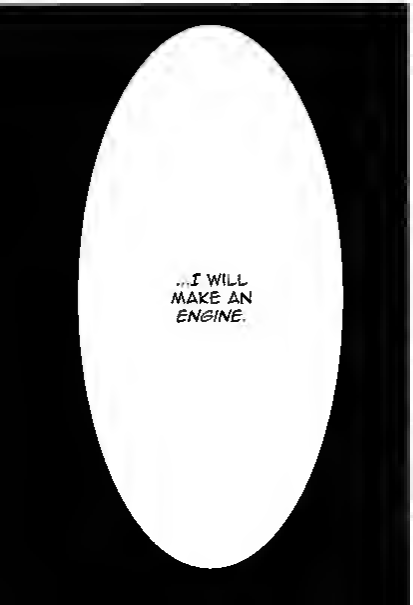
AND HERE...
...WE HAD YET TO EVEN MOUNT THE CANNON.
AND EVEN IF WE HAD...
...THIS BEAST IS SO HEAVY THAT IT WILL NOT MOVE WITHOUT AT LEAST TWO OTHER ENGINES PULLING IT UP TO SPEED.

AND WITH EVEN THE SLIGHTEST INCLINE IN THE TRACK, YOU'LL NEED NO LESS THAN THREE TO PULL OR BRACE.
SO HERE IT IS, THE GREATEST STEAM ENGINE EVER MADE, PAID FOR IN A HILL OF GOLD AND A SEA OF BLOOD...
...QUIET AND UNCLAIMED.
BUT AS WE CONSTRUCTED IT, WE MADE MANY GREAT DISCOVERIES IN TECHNOLOGY.
AND THAT IS WHY IT'S NOT JUST A SHADOW OVER ALL OF US, BUT ALSO OUR FINEST WORK.

NOW, MAJOR GREY.
NOW THAT YOU'VE SEEN OUR DEEPEST SHAME AND PINNACLE OF ACHIEVEMENT...
...DO YOU STILL WANT TO CHALLENGE ME IN A GAME OF MAKING?!
HE BROUGHT US HERE TO INTIMIDATE US
I HAVE TO MATCH HIM AND PUSH HIM OFF BALANCE!
MAJOR...
MAJOR, ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS...?
YOU START WITH SHOWING US YOUR GREATEST WORK?
YOU'RE MAKING ME WONDER...
KING HAVOL, ARE YOU AFRAID OF ME?
GRIT

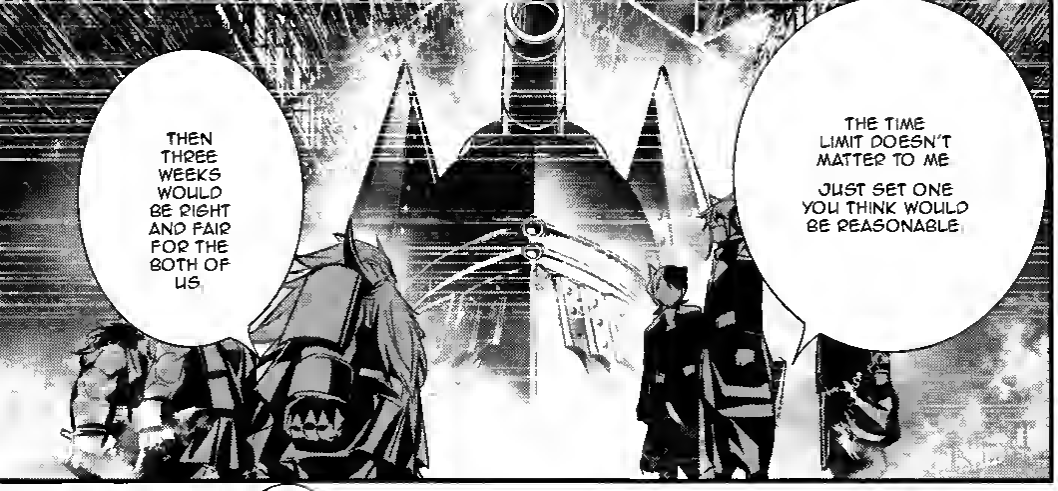
BOOM
AM I WHAT?!
AM I WHAT?!
I WAS RUDE, I APO-LOGIZE.

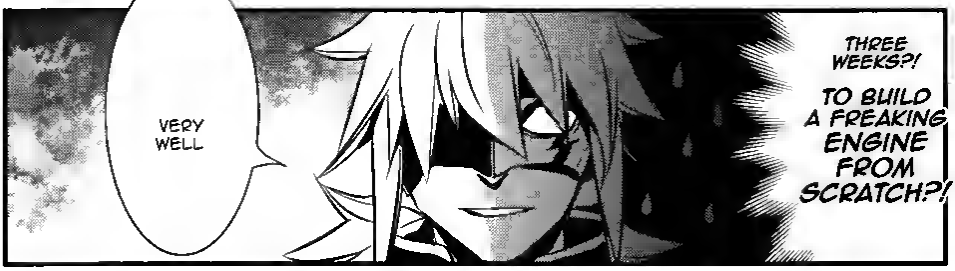

HRMMHH...
LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH!
AS MY SUBJECT IN THIS GAME, I CHOOSE THIS "BALL POINT PEN" OF YOURS
I WILL EXAMINE IT, AND I WILL MAKE A PEN THAT'S EVEN BETTER!
HM...


...I WILL MAKE AN ENGINE.

WHAT A BORING SUBJECT!
IF YOU PERMIT ME, KING HAVOL

IT'LL BE BOTH FASTER...
...AND FAR MORE POWER-FUL.
IN FACT, I WILL MAKE ONE THAT'S EVEN BETTER THAN THIS BEAST OF YOURS.
YOU...
YOU'RE SERIOUS?!
FINE!
THE GAME BEGINS!
ARE YOU LOSING YOUR NERVE, KING HAVOL?
THIS...
THIS IS...
BUT IT IS QUITE A TASK
I CAN'T MAKE IT WITH JUST THREE PEOPLE.
ALWAYS.
I WILL REQUIRE MATERIALS AND A LOCATION.
...AND CRAFTS-MEN.

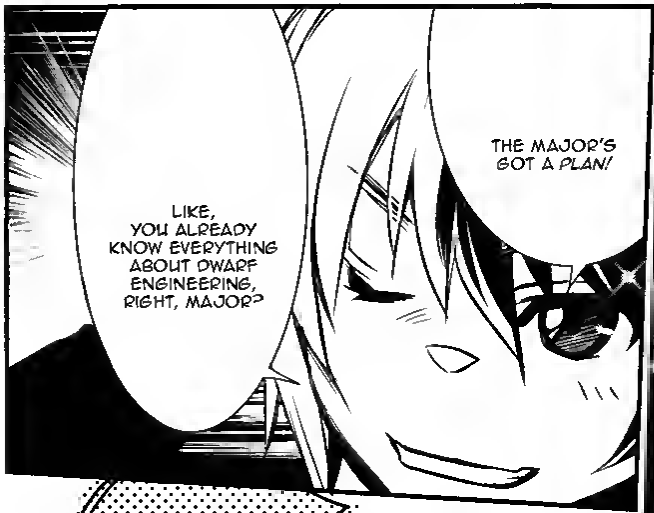

THEN THREE WEEKS WOULD BE RIGHT AND FAIR FOR THE BOTH OF US
THE TIME LIMIT DOESN'T MATTER TO ME
JUST SET ONE YOU THINK WOULD BE REASONABLE


VERY WELL
THREE WEEKS?!
TO BUILD A FREAKING ENGINE FROM SCRATCH?!

I'M READY
AND WHEN YOU DO, YOU WILL FACE THE LAWFUL CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR TRANSGRESSION!
IF YOU'RE NOT FINISHED WITHIN THREE WEEKS, YOU LOSE!
AND THE RULES ARE SIMPLE, SNEAK-THIEF!

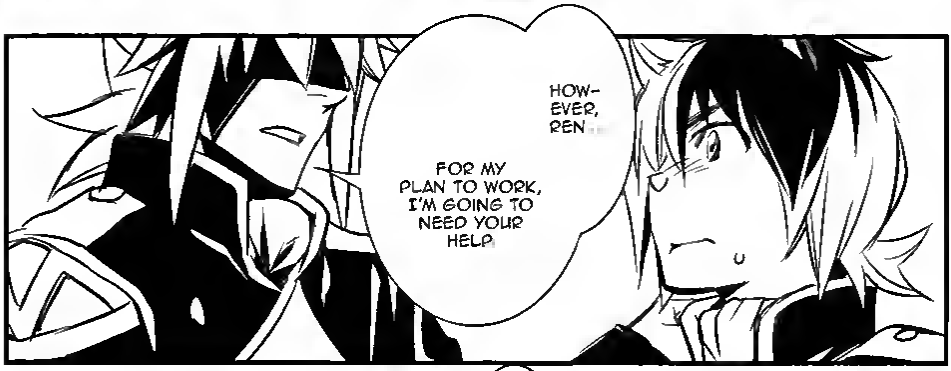
MAJOR, HAVE YOU GONE INSANE?!

DWARVEN MACHINES...
EVERYONE KNOWS THEY'RE THE BEST IN THE WORLD!
AND YOU'RE GOING TO COMPETE WITH THAT THING?!
BEST IN THE WORLD, HUH?
THEN I CAN'T THINK OF A BETTER REASON TO CHALLENGE IT!
BUT...

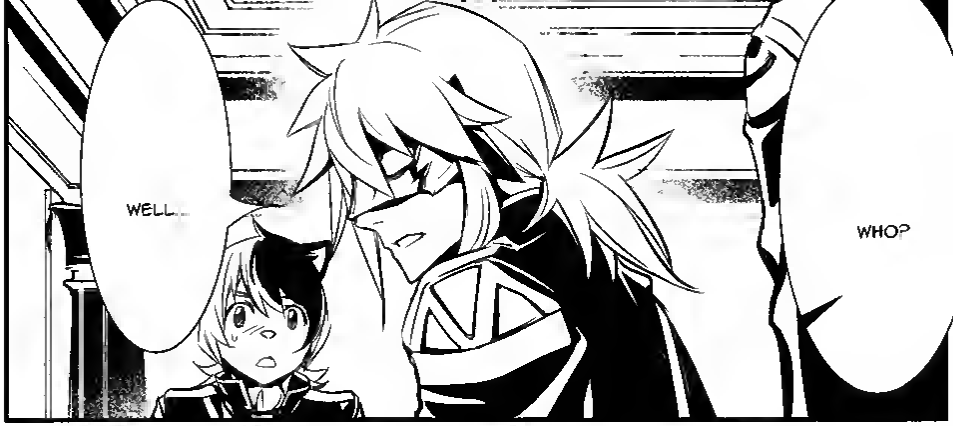

THE MAJOR'S GOT A PLAN!
LIKE, YOU ALREADY KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT DWARF ENGINEERING, RIGHT, MAJOR?

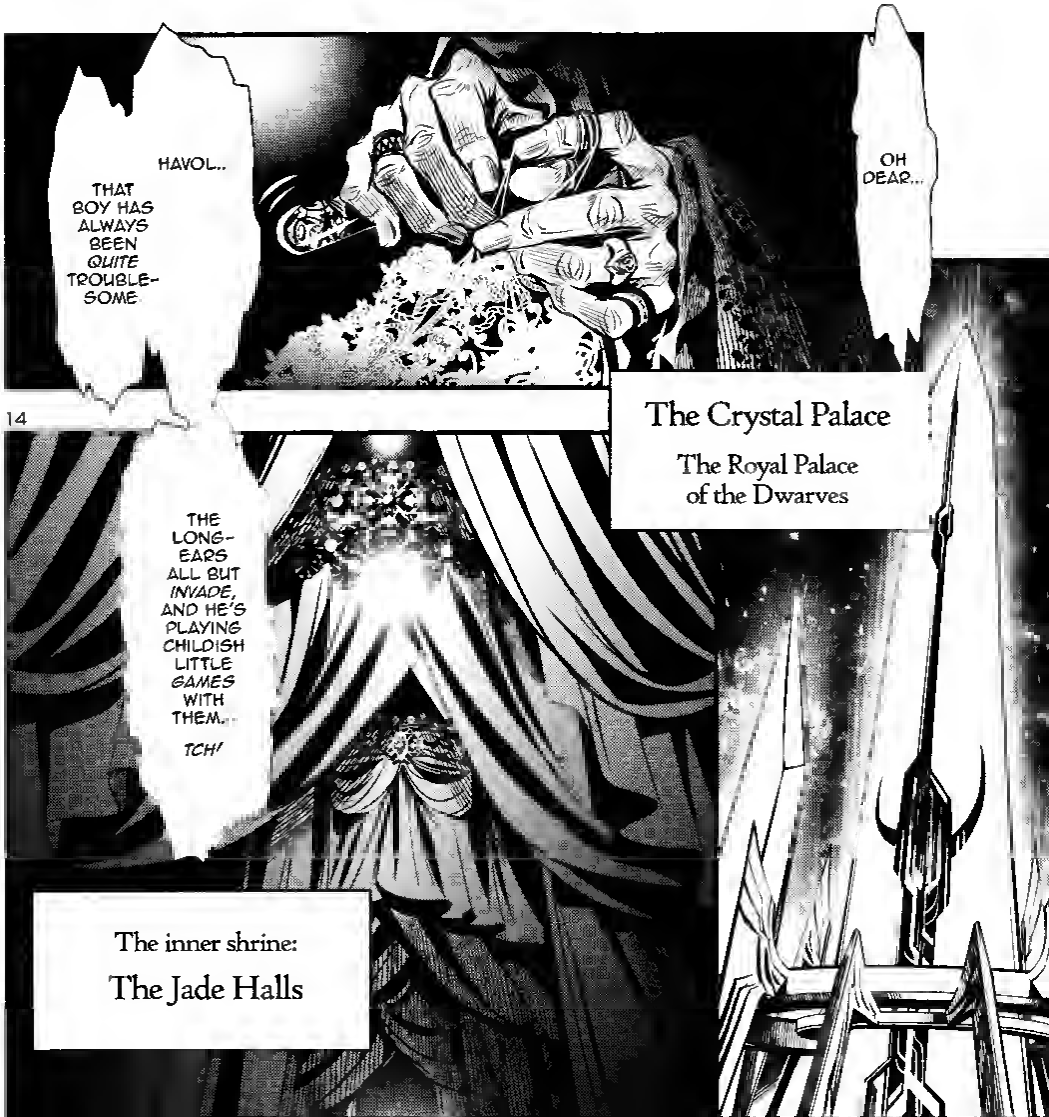
DON'T WORRY, SERGEANT!
I MEAN, HAVEN'T YOU LEARNED BY NOW

YEAH!
HAH!
YOU KNOW ME SO WELL ALREADY, REN!
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE MY STEWARD, RIGHT?
...BUT I THINK I DO HAVE SOMETHING OF AN IDEA...
HOW-EVER...
I DON'T THINK I CAN HANDLE THIS LEVEL OF UN-EARNED LOYALTY.
YOU'VE GOT THIS, MAJOR!
'CAUSE YOU'RE AWESOME!


HOW-EVER, REN...
FOR MY PLAN TO WORK, I'M GOING TO NEED YOUR HELP.

REN BARKER PRIVATE FIRST CLASS...
I'M GIVING YOU A MISSION
I NEED YOU TO GO TO JOSOGA AND BRING SOMEONE BACK HERE.
IT'S ABSOLUTELY VITAL FOR MY PLAN TO WORK.
THE PLACE BY THE BORDER WHERE OUR TROOPS ARE NOW, JOSOGA...
HOW LONG TO GET THERE AND BACK?
SOME FIVE DAYS BY TRAIN.


WELL...
WHO?


OH DEAR...
HAVOL..
THAT BOY HAS ALWAYS BEEN QUITE TROUBLE-SOME
THE LONG-EARS ALL BUT INVADE, AND HE'S PLAYING CHILDISH LITTLE GAMES WITH THEM...
TCH!
The Crystal Palace
The Royal Palace of the Dwarves
The inner shrine:
The Jade Halls

...BUT I HAVE TO WONDER, WHAT *WOULD* HAPPEN...
...IF HE *LOST*?
AND NO DOUBT THE THOUGHT NEVER EVEN ENTERED HIS *MIND*.
...IF THE LONG-EARS WERE TO DIE IN OUR KINGDOM...
...WOULD IT NOT BE A *MOST* CONVENIENT EXCUSE FOR THE LITTLE PRINCE TO ATTACK?
AH...
AND YET...
GRAND-MOTHERS...
THE HAND IS MOVING.
WORRY NOT
15
...AND HE KNOWS FULL WELL THAT ARMED MEN IN A FOREIGN NATION ARE SO *EASY* TO LOSE
HE SENT ARMED MEN ACROSS OUR BORDER...
snip

...!!

WELL, HERE THEY ARE...
NOW, I KNOW SOME OF YOU ARE ..
.. DIS-SATISFIED WITH ALL THIS.
WE AREN'T MEETING IN THE BEST OF CIRCUM-STANCES ..
.AND YOU DON'T HAVE MUCH LOVE FOR MY KIND
BUT REALLY, NONE OF THAT SHOULD MATTER
YOU'RE DWARVES AND YOU'RE CRAFTS-MEN YOU LIVE TO BUILD
AND THAT'S WHY KING HAVOL SENT YOU HERE, TO BUILD

WE'LL BUILD FOR YE, LAD, AND WELL.
BUT CREATION AIN'T A THING TO BE *COMMANDED.*
THE BUILD MASTER DOESN'T *ORDER,* HE *LEADS* AND LIGHTS THE WAY WITH THE FIRE IN HIS HEART.
THEN THINGS ARE BUILT THE *RIGHT* WAY!

DO YE HAVE THAT IN YE?
I DO.

WHAT I WANT IS A STEAM ENGINE, LIKE THIS ONE
USE THE SAME PROCEDURE AS WHEN YOU MADE THIS ONE.
JUST MAKE THE PIECES NEEDED, ONE BY ONE, STEP BY STEP, BUT DON'T ASSEMBLE THEM.
WHAT?!

I WON'T GIVE ANY BIG SPEECHES
AYE?
AND WHAT'RE WE BUILDING?

YOU WANT US TO MAKE A COPY?!
AND WHAT WILL YOU DO, NOTHING?!
I PRO-MISE...
...THAT IF YOU LET ME LEAD YOU IN THIS BUILD...
...AND IF YOU TRUST ME...
...I'M GOING TO SHOW YOU THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD.

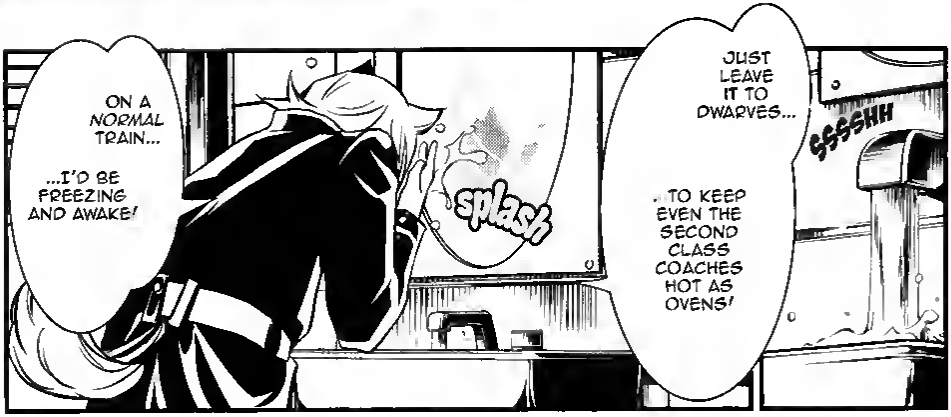
I HAVE TA SAY, THAT LITTLE PEN O' YOURS WAS A FINE THING.
THIS WILL BE FAR BETTER THAN A PEN, THAT I ASSURE YOU
THEN SO BE IT
RIGHT, LADS, WORK BEGINS!
AND IF YE CAN MAKE SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT...
...MAYBE YOU'RE WORTH LISTENIN' TO
BOSS...
WHY'S HE LISTE-NING TO THAT LONG-EARS?

I DON'T THINK THAT'LL BE NECES-SARY.
THE BOYS'LL SHOVE YER ELF ARSE INTO THE BLAST FURNACE.
JUST KNOW IF YER LYIN' IT WON'T BE A DROP DOWN THE MOUNTAIN FOR YE.

WELL, I'M IN IT NOW.
..AND I'M ALL OUT OF EMPTY PROMISES.
AND WHILE I'M NOT A BUILDER LIKE YOU...
..JUST LET ME KNOW IF THERE'S WORK I CAN DO!

I'M COUNTING ON YOU, REN!

slap
THIS IS NOT GOOD
I'M ABOUT TO FALL ASLEEP!
KTAK KTAK KTAK KTAK
nod


splash
ON A NORMAL TRAIN...
...I'D BE FREEZING AND AWAKE!
JUST LEAVE IT TO DWARVES...
SSSSHH
. TO KEEP EVEN THE SECOND CLASS COACHES HOT AS OVENS!

twitch
OH, EXCUSE ME!
sigh

THAT SCENT...

POISON!
21
SLASH
HN...!

WHAM
PAF!
22
YANK
A POISONED NEEDLE?!
BUT WHY?!
BRMMM
WHOOOSH
KHAH!

SHOVE
...!!
GHAAAA!

10 days later...

ALL THE PARTS ARE JUST ABOUT DONE, FINALLY.
THEY'LL BE READY TO BE ASSEMBLED SOON ENOUGH...
...SO THE LADS ARE WAITIN' FOR YER NEXT STEP 'FORE TIME RUNS OUT ON US

THIS IS DAY TEN.
AND YOU'VE DONE SOME GOOD WORK.
GIVE ME A LITTLE MORE TIME.
BUT I'M NOT READY YET.
NO, I'LL SHOW YOU.
JUST DON'T LET US DOWN, ELF!
UM.
HONORED, UM
ELVES...?
click
?
HE DEFINITELY SHOULD'VE BEEN BACK BY NOW!
I DON'T CARE HOW SLOW THE TRAIN WAS!
AND WHERE THE FUCK IS REN?!
FUCK.!

TONIGHT...
...WEAR THIS AND GO TO THE BACK OF THE JADE HALLS
PRINCESS DORONEA MUST SPEAK WITH YOU!
UH...
AREN'T THESE WOMEN'S CLOTHES?
OKAY...
WELL, I GUESS IT'S TO AVOID SUSPICION...
YOU MEAN YOU'RE GOING?!
THE JADE HALLS IS WHERE THE WOMEN ARE!
YOU GET CAUGHT SNEAKING AROUND THERE, WHO EVEN KNOWS WHAT KIND OF PUNISHMENT YOU'LL GET!

MAJOR.
THAT MAY BE...
...BUT IF REN DOESN'T COME BACK, WE'RE STUCK ANYWAY.
THIS MIGHT BE JUST WHAT WE NEED
I HAVE TO GO.
MAJOR GREY

FOR ALL HIS AMBITION, HIS WORK HAS STALLED.
AND CONSIDERING THE PROCESSES AHEAD, HE'S EFFECTIVELY OUT OF TIME ALREADY.
I CAN'T IMAGINE HE'LL MAKE IT
DON'T BE SAD FOR HIM.
I'LL FIND YOU A GOOD MAN.
SOMEONE WHO CAN SEE PAST THE FEAR AND GREED YOUR AMBROSIA INSPIRES...
...
AND SEE YOU, AND LOVE YOU, FOR WHO YOU ARE
AMBROSIA...

THE GRANDMOTHERS SAY IF I GIVE OF MY BREAST TO SOMEONE
THE GODS WILL CURSE THEM WITH MADNESS AND BLESS THEM WITH TERRIBLE POWER
AND THAT'S WHY PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS COME TO CLAIM ME
A—
AAH...

THIS...
...IS THE PRINCESS' CHAMBER?
flutter

OH!
MAJOR GREY, PLEASE!
YOU MUSTN'T SEE MY FACE!
HOW
HOW TERRIBLY RUDE OF ME!
turn!
JUST..
PLEASE WAIT A MOMENT!

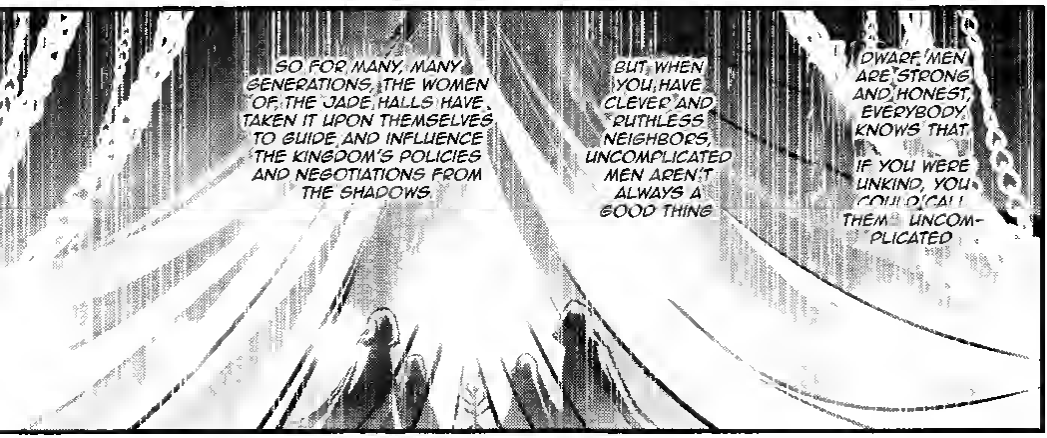
SO...
YOU WANTED TO TELL ME SOMETHING?

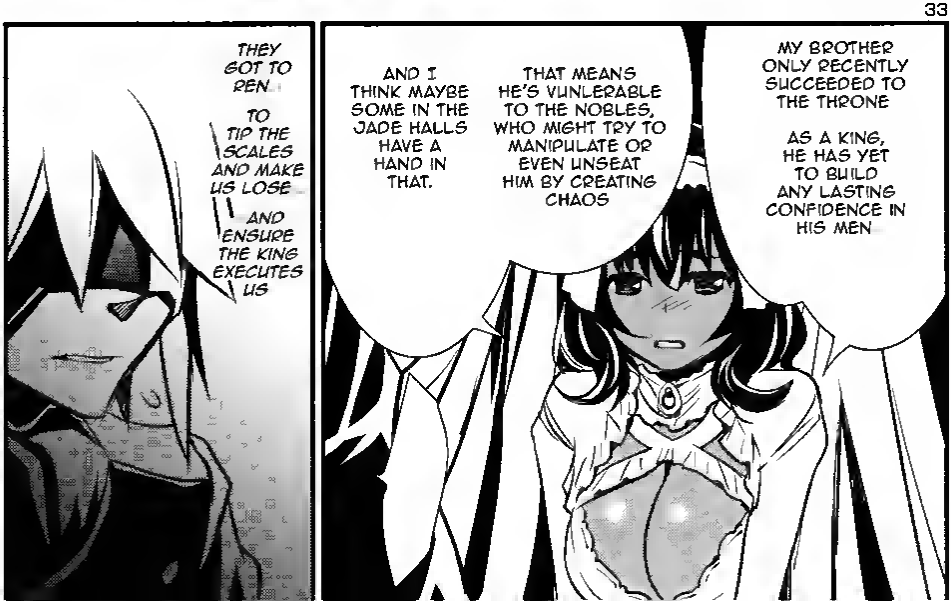
I'M SO SORRY!
PRINCESS?!
WHAT IS THIS?!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!

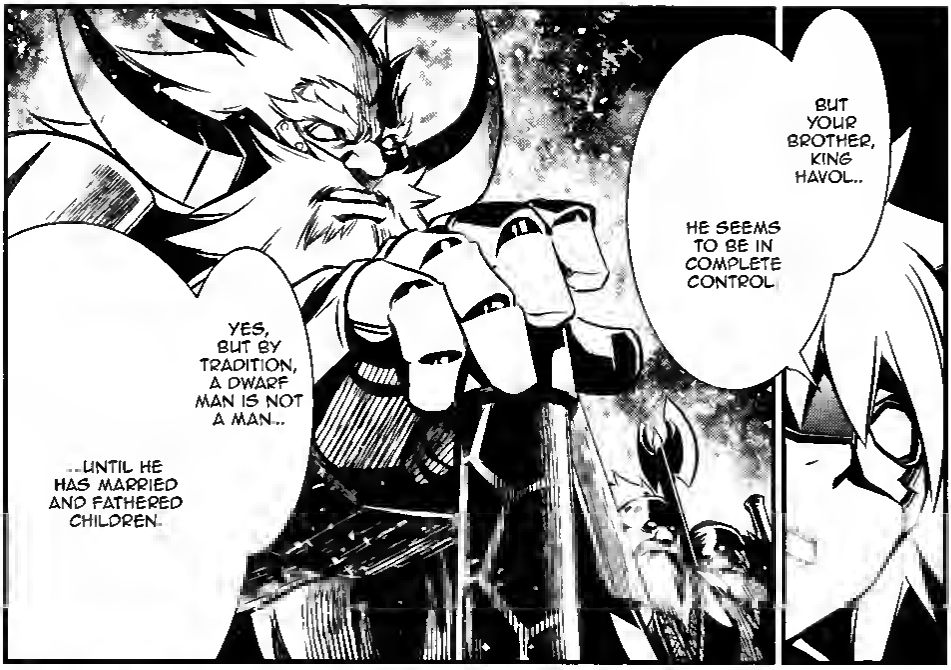
...
THE MAN YOU SENT, HE...
HE HASN'T COME BACK YET.
...AND THAT IS WHY YOUR WORK HAS STOPPED?
YES.
TO BE HONEST...
...ARAN AND I, WE'RE IN A BAD WAY.

...
I'M SORRY!
I SHOULD'VE TOLD YOU SOONER...
...BUT EVEN THE MAIDS AREN'T ALWAYS ALLOWED TO GO OUTSIDE, AND I COULDN'T REACH YOU!
I THINK...
...IT'S THE GRAND-MOTHERS.

CAN YOU TELL ME IN DETAIL EXACTLY WHAT'S GOING ON?
THE "INNER SHRINE"?
YES.


DWARF MEN ARE STRONG AND HONEST. EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT.
IF YOU WERE UNKIND, YOU COULD CALL THEM UNCOMPLICATED
BUT WHEN YOU HAVE CLEVER AND RUTHLESS NEIGHBORS, UNCOMPLICATED MEN AREN'T ALWAYS A GOOD THING
SO FOR MANY, MANY GENERATIONS, THE WOMEN OF THE JADE HALLS HAVE TAKEN IT UPON THEMSELVES TO GUIDE AND INFLUENCE THE KINGDOM'S POLICIES AND NEGOTIATIONS FROM THE SHADOWS.

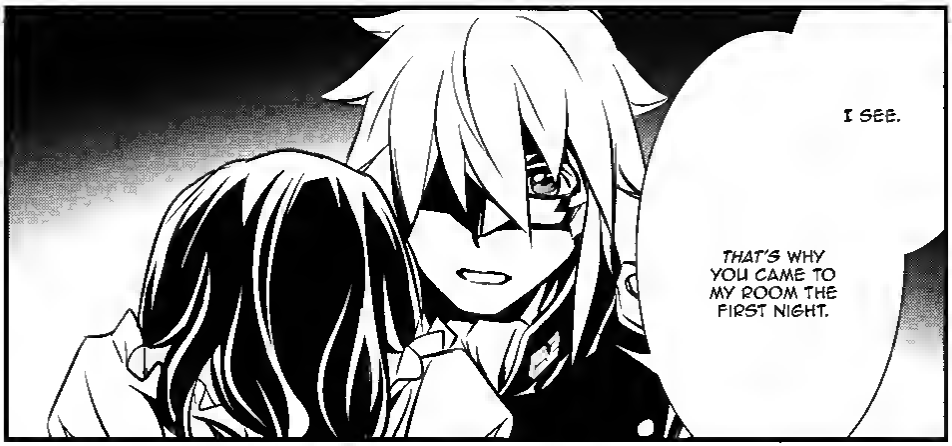

MY BROTHER ONLY RECENTLY SUCCEEDED TO THE THRONE
AS A KING, HE HAS YET TO BUILD ANY LASTING CONFIDENCE IN HIS MEN
THAT MEANS HE'S VULNERABLE TO THE NOBLES, WHO MIGHT TRY TO MANIPULATE OR EVEN UNSEAT HIM BY CREATING CHAOS
AND I THINK MAYBE SOME IN THE JADE HALLS HAVE A HAND IN THAT.
THEY GOT TO REN
TO TIP THE SCALES AND MAKE US LOSE
AND ENSURE THE KING EXECUTES US


BUT YOUR BROTHER, KING HAVOL..
HE SEEMS TO BE IN COMPLETE CONTROL
YES, BUT BY TRADITION, A DWARF MAN IS NOT A MAN..
..UNTIL HE HAS MARRIED AND FATHERED CHILDREN.

34

. HE SWORE THAT HE WOULD NOT TAKE A BRIDE UNTIL I'M SAFELY MARRIED TO A MAN WHO WON'T TRY TO USE ME
AND WHEN MY BROTHER LEARNED THAT I WAS BORN WITH AMBROSIA
AND YOU ALREADY KNOW MY BROTHER IS VERY, VERY STUBBORN

SO NOW I'M IN HIS WAY..
...AND HE MIGHT LOSE THE THRONE BECAUSE OF ME!


I SEE.
THAT'S WHY YOU CAME TO MY ROOM THE FIRST NIGHT.

THAT'S WHY YOU SAID YOU HAD TO GET AWAY
YOU WERE DESPE-RATE TO HELP HIM
YOU CAME ON SO STRONG.
HONESTLY, YOU KINDA FREAKED THE HELL OUT OF ME!

BECAUSE...
BECAUSE IF I BECAME YOURS...
...MY BROTHER WOULD BE FREE!
SO THAT'S...

Pat
WE MUSTN'T TALK ABOUT THAT!

AND IF I MAY BE HONEST TOO...
...I WAS EMBARRASSED PAST THINKING!

PLEASE MAJOR GREY!
I WILL TRY TO SPEAK TO MY BROTHER!
IF WE APOLOGIZE TO HIM TOGETHER, MAYBE HE'LL FORGIVE YOU!
SO—
O

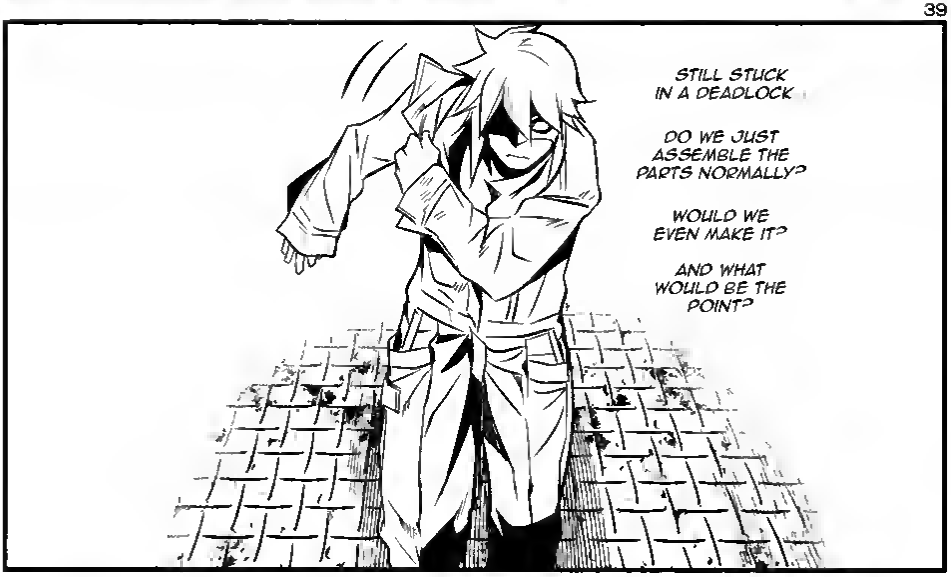
BUT YES
THAT'S WHY I DID...
...WHAT I DID

AND WHEN I'M FREE TO LEAVE .
I WILL HELP YOU!
IT'LL BE FINE!
I'LL THINK OF SOME-THING
BUT—

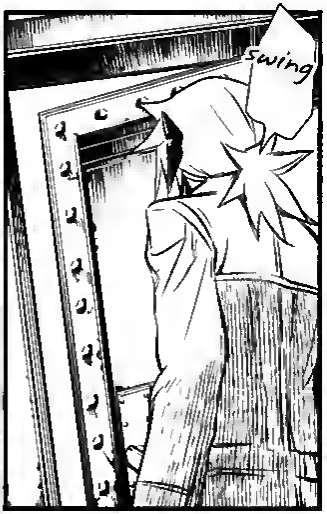
...!

NO!
JUST CALL ME DORONEA.
PLEASE!
THEN, THANK YOU...
...DORONEA.

BUT, PLEASE...
I WANT YOU TO PROMISE...
IF YOU NEED MY HELP...
DO YOUR BEST TO LET ME KNOW!
I UNDER-STAND.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH..
..PRINCESS DORONEA.


STILL STUCK IN A DEADLOCK
DO WE JUST ASSEMBLE THE PARTS NORMALLY?
WOULD WE EVEN MAKE IT?
AND WHAT WOULD BE THE POINT?

!!


swing

YOU'RE OUT OF TIME..
..LONG-EARS

KING HAVOL..

I KNOW OF YOUR PLANS.
THE DAYS THAT ARE LEFT ARE NOT ENOUGH
YOU'VE LOST.

BUT MORE THAN THAT...
...I ALSO HEARD YOU LED THESE CRAFTSMEN ON WITH PROMISES OF NEW TECHNOLOGY!
AND IF THERE'S ONE THING, ONE THING I WILL NOT ABIDE, IT IS A LIAR!
ESPECIALLY ONE WHO LIES ABOUT THE ARTS OF CRAFTING!
THIS GAME IS OVER!
YOU WILL NOT BE PARDONED!
YOU WILL BE THROWN IN THE FURNACE!
PLEASE WAIT!
THINK!
THINK!

THERE IS STILL TIME, KING HAVOL!
TOK TOK TOK TOK
OR ARE YOU SO GRASPING FOR VICTORY THAT YOU WOULD ALTER AN AGREEMENT?
IS THAT THE ACT OF A RULER GUIDED BY DWARVEN LAW?
TOK

PRINCESS SAKURA OF ADAAR?!

I'M SO GLAD I MADE IT!
AND IT LOOKS LIKE THIS TIME...
...I'M THE ONE WHO COMES TO THE RESCUE—
...GREY!

神咒のネクタール

SHINJU NO NECTAR
NECTAR OF DHARANI

NEXT:
CHAPTER 11

ESTIMATED RELEASE DATE:
OCTOBER 13, 2017

finemang.tk